

LYNNFIELD ADVOCATE



Free to every Lynnfield Home!

ECRWSEDDOM
PSRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT # 167
WOBLURN, MA
POSTAL CUSTOMER

Vol. 2, No. 36 - FREE - www.advocateneews.net Lynnfield@advocateneews.net 781-233-4446 Friday, September 9, 2016

Lynnfield brothers celebrate 50 years in business

By Bill Laforme

Lynnfield business that began with two brothers mowing their neighbors' lawns and shoveling snow just celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Changing considerably over the years, The Reed Corporation, a family business run by

William Wesley "Wes" and Billings "Biz" Reed, now under the name of Olde New England Granite, specializes in providing historic granite – much of it reclaimed from locally significant bridges and other structures – for projects of all sizes.

Starting in 1960 when Wes and Biz were a respective 12

and 10 years old, the seeds of the future company were planted when they started mowing lawns, shoveling snow and doing other tasks for neighbors. In the late 1960s, the brothers also still had time to work as day camp coun-

CELEBRATE | SEE PAGE 6

CELEBRATE | from page 1

selors at the Wakefield YMCA camp and as playground instructors in Lynnfield. Today, Wes is the Chief Executive Officer/President and Biz is Vice President/Chief Operating Officer of their company.

As they started working, the brothers' industriousness paid off, their reputations grew, and in 1966 they officially started their company, transporting their equipment around Lynnfield with a little trailer towed by their parents' station wagon.

The man who sold them their first truck in 1970 was actually a guest at last month's anniversary celebration at their home and office off Summer Street, said Wes in a recent conversation with *the Advocate*. Another guest was a customer who first hired the brothers 44 years ago. The celebration also reportedly included entertainment by Charlie Thomas of "The Drifters," who were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988. Wes called the evening an "unbelievable milestone" and "an incredible celebration," adding that "there was joy in the house" that night.

If the brothers didn't know how to do a specific landscaping task in the early days, they learned. The brothers also credit their parents, Bill and Edith Reed, with early support that helped them build success. Reportedly, Edith answered the phone for the boys while Bill handled the accounting. "They encouraged our entrepreneurial endeavors," said Wes, adding that their parents didn't mind if they were late for dinner because of work. "They totally understood the nature of our work," he added.

In the mid-1960s, the Reed brothers both attended and then graduated from Northeastern University, and Wes recalled how Biz had made running the company his co-op job while there. Meanwhile, Wes later went to dental school and became an endodontist – a profession that he also puts in full-time hours to this day, and Biz ran the business full time.

According to their company website, the business also got a boost in the early 1970s when a number of prominent Boston athletes were living in town and, of course, needed landscaping work done. Then, after the Blizzard of 1978, the company got another boost from many newfound snow removal customers.

As the brothers grew their company, they also found a niche or two where they could find new opportunities while also keeping their previous tasks, such as landscaping and snow removal. In the early 1990s when changes in Massachusetts Title V regulations were implemented, the brothers decided to begin installing challenging septic systems with encouragement from their father, who often said, "The difficult we'll do immediately, the impossible might take a little longer." Another way they distinguished themselves was by being able to restore the landscaping that would typically be disrupted by a septic project. One project even involved taking up and restoring a 50-year-old award-winning perennial garden while installing a system. "That is not your average septic system project," said Wes. "We were not afraid to take on a very challenging job."

Some septic systems required granite retention walls, and the company started to



Customers and friends of The Reed Corporation/Olde New England Granite Sam DeMarco (left) of Lynnfield and Ed Green of Wakefield brought their classic cars to the company's 50th Celebration. Company President/CEO Wes Reed (center) holds a picture of his dad, Bill, and the first truck of "the boys," which was purchased in 1970 from Skip Mucci of Malden (right side of Wes); Vice President/COO Biz Reed (far right). (Courtesy Photo)



Rock and Roll Hall of Famer, Charlie Thomas of The Drifters entertained the guests at the Reed Corporation's recent 50th anniversary celebration. (Courtesy Photo)

stockpile some granite for use on future jobs around this time. Eventually, the septic system market became more crowded, and the company found another niche for itself – providing granite to other contractors

for various projects. Around this time the company finally found a temporary "home" off Kimball Lane in Lynnfield – a time that Wes described as a nomadic existence in part because the operation on Summer Street in Lynnfield had run into some zoning issues.

Along with Lynnfield, the company had gained a strong foothold around Cape Ann, said Wes, with help from a good word-of-mouth reputation as well as a willingness to work during the winter months. "We had the reputation of being able to preserve their property and respect what they had," he added.

In 2008, with the downturn in the economy, home sales and building – by necessity – the boys started Olde New England Granite. Biz was convinced that there was a market for "historic" granite. Some of the stone the company handled included materials recovered from locally significant structures, such as the 19th Century Essex-Merrimack Bridge. An ample amount of granite reportedly came from the Big Dig, and apparently, people from all over New England had been keeping their own piles of granite

around without much to do with them. "We love the material, we love the history of the material," said Wes.

Another project where they harvested granite curbing material was from the Franconia Notch Parkway in New Hampshire when it was expanded. "We had a highly coveted material that everyone wanted and nobody had," said Wes, adding that the company has also benefited from the popularity of the green building movement among architects and contractors. "We reinvented ourselves in a way that helped us sustain," said Wes.

The company also provided Rockport granite, which hasn't been quarried in nearly a century, to the ongoing Longfellow Bridge repair and expansion project in Boston. They also got some surplus granite from the bridge itself and sold it for stairs, lamp posts, tables and other things. Wes said that one person had even called the company looking for a small piece of the Longfellow Bridge granite because his grandfather had walked across it daily.

Despite finding new markets for their services, Wes recalled how the recession of nearly a decade ago had come close to ruining their company as well as many other contractors. He added that some of the company's vendors have been with them for 50 years, and he credited their trust and faith with helping them navigate tough times.

Olde New England Granite, in their new home at One New Salem St. in Wakefield, sells stone all over the country, and primarily recovers material from within Massachusetts. "We like to think of ourselves as rescuing historic material from being crushed up for road projects and repurposing it," said Wes.

To learn more about The Reed Corporation and Olde New England Granite, visit OldNewEnglandGranite.com.

AFTER A DAY AT A WATER PARK OR THE BEACH IT'S DEFINITELY KELLY'S FOR DINNER!

It's been a long day with the kids and you want to feed them something great, so why not Kelly's Roast Beef and Seafood? Here are a few reasons why!

- Kid's Plates, with lots of choices. Including, Chicken fingers or wings
- Salads and wraps of any combination
- 100 plus choices of ice cold Coca-Cola products
- Favorites: delicious and fresh lobster rolls, melt-in-your-mouth roast beef

Need any more reasons, the friendliest staff, and the cleanest facilities around for your dining pleasure. Remember, summertime is fun time at Kelly's. Monday night is Kid's Night with lots of surprises. Birthday Parties (call for reservations) and join Kelly's Kids Klub and receives a free birthday meal. (www.kellysroastbeef.com).

For dinner or anytime, make it Kelly's Roast Beef & Seafood in Saugus
595 Broadway (Rt. 1 South) • Call ahead: 781-233-5000